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# Two Neglected Poets of Late Victorian Scotland: John Luby and James Lynch


## Abstract

This article seeks to offer a way forward in investigating the contribution of a hitherto neglected group of Catholic poets working in Scotland in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The works of John Luby (1856-1925) of Bridgeton and James Lynch (1840/41-86) of Coatbridge are pre-eminent amongst these writers but they are not alone in their efforts. Others, such as Tom Burns, Thomas McMillan, Francis Joseph, John St Paul and Rev. Bernard Tracy (the first Catholic priest in Scotland to be elected to a school board), are to be found in the pages of magazines and newspapers, especially the *Glasgow Observer*, the weekly newspaper of the Irish Catholic diaspora in the West of Scotland, established in 1885 and the principal source of the material considered here. This article will introduce Luby and Lynch in turn, dedicating space to what is known of their lives and writings generally before providing an outline of their main concerns in a selection of the *Glasgow Observer* poems.


The growth and development of the Catholic community in Scotland in the Victorian era has not been without its historians. Indeed, there continues to be real excitement generated as scholars have in recent years begun to explore new themes and avenues in seeking to throw more light on the far-from-monochrome experience of the community as the nineteenth century moved towards its conclusion.[1] What had once been a depleted community, rooted mainly in remote areas in the north-east and the western isles, grew exponentially throughout the nineteenth century in the burgeoning urban centres of the central belt and lowlands, largely as a result of Irish migration in search of work and new opportunities.[2] However, this

head-spinning expansion was not without its tensions as those, including bishops and priests, who perceived themselves to be representatives of an indigenous, Scots tradition of the 'old faith' sought to maintain both identity and influence in the face of overwhelming numbers from across the Irish Sea. Shared faith did not equate automatically with shared vision, as Bernard Aspinwall so robustly illustrated in a 1996 article.[3] The appointment of an Englishman, Charles Petre Eyre, as archbishop in Glasgow in 1869 is symptomatic of an institutional response to such 'in-house' dispute.[4] At the same time, however, there was a sense of grievance inculcated amongst the entire Catholic community in terms of the perceived prejudices and, on occasion, real intimidation experienced in the workplace and in neighbourhoods on account of their religion. While there has been a good deal of scholarly nuance applied to this picture in recent years, it is important to acknowledge still the power of the perception amongst contemporaries in the face of countless unrecorded slights and barbed exchanges.[5] In sum, the experience particularly of Irish Catholics in Victorian Scotland was such that it is possible to discern the emergence of a narrative which is characterised by intimations of indignation, fortitude, resilience, nostalgia (for Ireland, the 'old country'), reclamation (laying claim to continuity with an older, pre-Reformation Scottish identity) and a hopeful sense of history being on one's own community's side (ultimately to be manifested in the patiently-sought return of Scotland to Catholicism). Part of the evidence in identifying these traits or tropes is the focus of the present article as it seeks to explore aspects of a hitherto largely ignored resource: poetry in the popular press of the Catholic community in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

There has been no blanket neglect of literature produced by representatives of 'the Catholic community' in Scotland in recent decades. However, what critical work there has been tends to focus on perceptions of Irishness in early to mid-twentieth-century Scotland. Liam McIlvanney led the way over a decade ago with his study of 'The Scottish Renaissance

and the Irish Invasion.'[6] McIlvanney's essay, however, is populated by names already familiar to students of the period (not all of them Catholic): these include Muriel Spark, Edwin Muir, George Malcolm Thomson, Hugh MacDiarmid, and Compton Mackenzie. In considering the presentation of the Irish – and, consequently, the religion of the majority of their number – McIlvanney sought to expose the fault lines in a previously monolithic presentation of Scottish culture as fundamentally anti-Irish. There was fellowship to be found in shared myths of Celtic identity in Scotland and Ireland's literary culture and networks during this period.

In seeking to take the focus back to before the First World War to the 1880s, this article aims principally to achieve two goals: first, to allow the voices of two representative Catholic poets in Scotland to speak for themselves and, second, to draw out their thematic preoccupation with such things as a poetic reclamation of Scotland's Catholic past; trans-Atlantic ties with Irish Americans; the poverty and hardship of Irish Catholic life in Scotland; and links with the universal Church, represented by loyalty to the papacy. Two poets in particular – John Luby (1856-1925) and James Lynch (1840/41-86) – provided between them a great many of the verses published in the *Glasgow Observer* in its earliest years. The *Observer*, established in April 1885, quickly established itself as a leading voice of the Irish Catholic diaspora in Scotland. During the embryonic period of its publication, the newspaper sought to provide its readership with a mix of news and commentary pertaining to British and Irish political and ecclesiastical affairs as well as reports on activities in Scottish Catholic missions (a rich and as yet still largely unexplored resource for the historian of the religious, social and cultural lives of these communities).[7] There was also, however, the typical Victorian fare of popular serialised stories (many sourced from America, often by non-Catholic authors) and a weekly column dedicated to poetry. The sheer range of subject-matter addressed by this poetry is impressive for it is not, as one might expect, only the religious

which catches the eyes of these men and women but social and economic commentary, the fate of the Irish diaspora abroad, and the emergence of the Celtic Revival both in Ireland and in Scotland.

**John Luby**

John Luby signed most of the poems discussed below with his 20 Franklin Street, Bridgeton address. He was the proprietor of the Bridgeton Stationery Warehouse, a supplier of paper, books and pencils. He was more than a purveyor of literature, however, crafting a series of poems which over a number of years were published in the popular press. His public impact was sufficient to justify his presence amongst the literati included in David Herschell Edwards' 1889 volume *Modern Scottish Poets*.[8] Luby was born on 4 May 1856 to Patrick Luby, labourer and latterly railway porter, and his wife, Elizabeth.[9] Edwards reported that Luby 'never attained the full use of his limbs' and this seems to be confirmed by an entry in the 1891 census which provides the brief comment 'cripple from childhood' beside Luby's entry.[10] He attended St Mary's school in the Calton district of Glasgow. Luby also makes an appearance in a biographical dictionary of *The Poets of Ireland*, published much later in 1912.[11] The author, David James O'Donoghue, Librarian of University College, Dublin, agrees that Luby was born in Glasgow but errs in suggesting that both his parents originated from Leitrim in Ireland: his mother was almost certainly a native of Donegal.[12] When Luby was still a child, his mother was widowed and took up employment in cotton weaving. The family appears to have been peripatetic in its homes but, essentially, Luby's childhood and adult life were mostly spent in the East End of Glasgow, amid the poverty and community rough-and-tumble of the tenement flats so characteristic of the place and period. Yet an ambition for learning and self-improvement seems to have been germinated in the Luby household. An older brother, Thomas, is recorded as a pupil teacher at 17 in the 1871 census.

John, the younger brother, is described as a student of art in 1881.[13] Ten years later he has become a 'stationer tobacconist'. This destiny as a small businessman, rather than in manual labour, may have been dictated to some extent by his physical challenges, whatever these may have been, but it would seem particularly significant for Luby the poet that his 'profession' as bookseller, printer and stationer would have potentially positioned him as a vital hub amongst local networks of poets, artists and writers.

David James O'Donoghue's brief entry in his volume passed no comment on the quality of Luby's poetic output, noting only that he had written a 'good deal of verse for various Irish and Scotch Catholic papers', citing in particular *The People's Journal* (Dundee), *The Weekly News* (Dundee), *Glasgow Observer* and the *Glasgow Weekly Mail*. He also credits Luby with self-publishing from his Bridgeton Stationery business two collections of poems, the first political and Irish (*The Book of the Season: Liberal Rhymes for Liberal Times*) and the second religious (*Poems*).[14] The year of publication for these two volumes is not verifiable but it would seem to be during the 1880s, and it is reasonable to guess that the three Luby poems selected by Edwards for his compendium of verse were drawn from those publications. However, the 1880s also saw the first appearance of the *Glasgow Observer*; the first issue was published in April 1885. During the first few years of publication, Luby was a regular contributor to the poetry column. In examining a representative sample of these poems below, Luby's main interests are allowed to come to the fore. Strikingly, his work displays a highly fluid identity, both pledging allegiance to an Irish heritage but also fitting in with current Scottish artistic and literary trends.

Indeed, Luby already displays strong imaginative accord with the Victorian Celtic Revival movement, which reached its pinnacle in the 1890s, in one of the earliest *Observer* poems, 'Scotiana'.[15] Ian Bradley notes that during the Revival period, Irish Catholics 'cold-shouldered the Celtic tradition simply because it had been so effectively and enthusiastically

taken over by the rival Church of Ireland.'[16] Nonetheless, in common with Irish Anglican appreciations of Celticism, in Scotland the romantic perception of Celtic Christianity was felt keenly by some of the *Glasgow Observer*'s Catholic poets. The 'mythical and unhistorical Irish past of mysterious Druids, sturdy peasants and pure, primitive Christians' can also be traced in the augmented, Scottish poetic landscape that Luby presents in 'Scotiana'.[17] The poem's speaker muses nostalgically on a Scotland where once the Catholic faith was embedded in the very landscape – 'The days were once when Holy Faith enrapped [*sic*.] thy crags and hills' (l. 1) – and the experience of daily life saw peasants 'toil to bring the fruits o' earth from out the verdent sod, / And blend their labour joyously, with orisons to God!' (ll. 3-4). Luby enshrines a heady vision of political and ecclesiastical equilibrium: 'And when around the Sacred Faith old Scottish hearts did cling, / How loyally they reverenced their country and their king' (ll. 11-12). However, these 'golden days of faith' (l. 13) were brought to an end in the sixteenth century and 'where the monks of old have taught, now heresiarchs lies' (l. 16). Luby's terminology is unforgiving here: 'fiends in human shape have breathed their hell-envenomed breath' (l. 14). What is particularly noticeable is that the loss of the Faith in Scotland is equated with displacement of the natural order. The River Clyde is now not 'so pure, so calm, so free' (l. 18) and 'the fish have fled the waters where they loved to sport and glide, / The waters that now roll along a turbid, grimy tide!' (ll. 19-20). Cathedrals and monasteries are 'sepulchres' (l. 24). However, Luby's own generation finds new promise as 'to this Scottish land of ours the Faith comes back at length' (l. 26). For Luby, therefore, a new (Revivalist) dawn beckons for Scotland and it is noticeable that he refers in 'Scotiana' to '*our* Scotland.' Luby proposes a 'reconquista' of Scotland in religious and cultural terms – a reclamation of Scotland's history such as would be so vividly mirrored in the deliberate sponsorship by nineteenth-century Catholic bishops of the cults of late antique and medieval saints, such as Ninian of Galloway.[18]

This iteration of Scotland's Catholic – indeed Celtic – roots is evoked even more powerfully in 'Caledonia to Columbia'.[19] An appendage to the poem's title relates that it was composed 'in answer to "Patrick" in *Boston Pilot*', probably a reference to Patrick Donahoe (1811– 1901), editor of Massachusetts' premier Catholic periodical.[20] This is evidence of wide, international reading on Luby's part. A combination of a shared faith and political aspiration turned the Atlantic into a lake across which there was much interchange in this period. One need look no further than the popular stories serialised in the *Glasgow Observer*, where many of the stories had American authors; American publications were just as greedy for British and Irish authors.[21]

'Caledonia to Columba' begins with an appeal to a common identity and heritage between Irish-American readers and first generation Irish-Scots:

> My hand! oh American brother,
> Far over the ocean's blue wave;
> From the land of my exile I greet thee
> O'er many an emigrant's grave.
> And what! tho' I ne'er saw thy features,
> In my mind's eye I ever will trace
> The mark of our motherland's manhood;
> The imprint of a down-trodden race. (ll. 1-8)

Both Luby and his similarly displaced Irish-American reader share a love of Ireland which is second only to 'the love for our Saviour above' (l. 12). However, while it may not be possible (as yet) to identify the views of Boston's 'Patrick' to which the poem is a reply, there might be some merit in surmising the source of Luby's motivation for the poem in its fourth stanza

where the theme of ‘bridge-building’ transfers from across the Atlantic ocean to across the Irish sea. Perhaps ‘Patrick’ had written disparagingly of Scotland and the Glasgow-born Luby wished to highlight a different way of perceiving Scotland, not as a land of Calvinist antipathy but, rather, as home to brother Celts, similarly downtrodden. As in ‘Scotiana’, a shared history is evoked:

> Yes! the Scot and the Celt should be brothers,
> Two nations comingling in one;
> Is our soil not alike, green and fertile?
> Rendered bright by the same brilliant sun?
> Saint Columba converted Iona:
> And oh! should we not feel pride
> In believing that Erin’s Apostle
> Was nurtured by bonnie Strathclyde? (ll. 25-32)

As the poem continues, it is plain that Luby’s spirituality is associated specifically with the Highlands of Scotland, a locus in which a truly Celtic identity can thrive. As Bradley notes, the Scottish ‘rediscovery and celebration of the tribal nature of Celtic Christianity’ was ‘in many ways part of a more general idealisation of the Highland and their inhabitants’.[22] It is no coincidence that Luby exalts Columba’s place in the formation of Scottish heritage and ethno-religious identity, as at the time Columba was an oft-seen romantic and heroic national figure in Scottish poetry, and he appears in works by many Scots Revivalists, including Robert Gibb, Robert Herdman, John Stewart Blackie, and Robert Brydall.[23]

In Luby’s idealised portrait of medieval, Catholic Scotland, his predilection for the land of bens and crags is presented:

Old Erin has had her victors,
And the Highlands of Scotland can tell,
Of the ravage of titled slave-masters,
Whose lives were the triumph of hell. (ll. 41-44)

In this period (particularly in Ireland and Wales), Celtic Christianity provided a colourful palette for the emergence of political and cultural nationalism in art. Luby can be seen to fit within this artistic landscape convincingly too. In his penultimate stanza, the message could not be clearer:

The Celt of the Highlands will stand
With the Celt of Old Erin, demanding
The right of a Free Fatherland.
And two nations, long dumb in their bondage,
Shall arise and, thank God, not to wail
O'er the cowardly might of the Saxon,
But the triumphant might of the Gael. (ll. 58-64)

Only in the final stanza does Luby's focus look across the Atlantic once more, extending a hand to his 'American brother' from 'the land of my kindred's adoption' (ll. 65-67). Finally, Luby clarion-like impresses his view of shared ties of race – the implication being that the Irish, Highland Scot and Irish American are 'traced' imperishably with 'The mark of our Motherland's manhood, / The imprint of a down-trodden race' (ll. 71-72).

Luby had no illusions as to the value of American Irish contributions to the cause of Home Rule. In ‘A Stream of Gold’, published only some weeks before ‘Caledonia to Columba’, Luby had eulogised the support sent across the Atlantic. The first stanza outlines American aid as two-fold: material, but also, significantly, cultural: ‘And they help the cause so old / By words that are flashed across the deep / And a constant stream of gold’ (ll. 6-8). This striking allusion to the transatlantic telegraph cable hints at the exciting new world of intercontinental communications which such technology offered. It also begs the question whether Luby does not intend there to be some ambivalence over the nature of the ‘gold’ which, evidently, can take the form of words as well as money. In the third stanza it is ‘thoughts’ which ‘speed o’er the foam’ between the countries: thoughts of ‘the churchyard mould / Where his dear dead lie’ (ll. 20-23). There follows a vignette of the employments of the Irish diaspora in America:

> The soldier beneath the American flag
> The clerk in the shop or mill
> The toilworn brawny labourer
> And the factory girl will fill
> Old Erin’s heart with the gladdening hope (ll. 25-29).

Luby encapsulates his contemporaries’ perceptions of Irish roles in the American experiment, making an impact on the unfolding story of their young republic as fighting men, bookkeepers, navvies or factory-hands. It is the ‘great American heart’ (l. 41) which is itself the force which ‘breaks sea-barriers down’ (l. 42): an allusion, once more, to ties of blood across the ocean. But the poem does not end here and it is perhaps significant that Luby concludes, finally, with a bookish allusion:

In that time when Scotia, Albion, Eire,
Are joined in one great fold;
In the page of our Nation's history,
Shall be told of America's gold (ll. 45-48).

Luby is alive to the fact that history is written by the victors and his final lines look forward to a future age when his espoused cause is triumphant, new relationships in the British Isles forged, and new histories written. By the poem's end, the reader is left to ponder that 'America's gold' is its Irish community – its people – as much as the monetary support proffered over the decades.

It is possible that another of Luby's poems, 'Help! Help! Help!!!', is an appeal to American purses on behalf of Ireland.[24] Tantalisingly, there is enough in the poem's verses at least to suggest it refers to the Irish experience in Scotland. The poem's outset seems to present a deliberate ambivalence on Luby's part. It might be an appeal directly to those who would send aid but, equally, it could be read as a summons to those in need to demonstrate initiative in appealing for help:

Rouse ye, my brothers, the matron, the maid,
Tortured by hunger, beseech ye for aid,
Orphan and widow, and careworn sire,
The homeless and shivering child of the mire
Beseech you to help the good brothers who find
A pleasure in helping the poor of mankind. (ll. 1-6)

Luby's fear that Catholics might, in their penurious circumstances, trade their faith for 'a bribe' (l. 15) certainly echoes contemporary wariness about accepting charity from beyond one's own community. Now, Luby asks his readership, 'can you blame them if they, all unaided by you, / Should prove false to their God, to their faith be untrue?' (ll. 17-18) Charity is not neutral – it is fuelled by confessional ideology. Indeed, such charity is a form of commerce: 'Then rouse ye, my brothers, while the tempter is nigh, / With his shibboleth prayer, and his upturned eye, / With a price for the souls. . .' (ll. 19-21) Luby exemplifies here an understanding of the economy of salvation: to be saved requires membership of the Catholic Church as encapsulated in the ancient phrase 'extra ecclesiam nulla salus'.[25]

'Help! Help! Help!!!' provides a context in which to approach a poem published some months earlier in 1885: 'Lines on the Brothers of St Vincent de Paul'.[26] It was precisely the role of the Society of St Vincent de Paul to coordinate the charitable efforts of Catholic missions, alleviating the causes of greatest material suffering as well as, in its early decades, promoting spiritual and cultural development by means of sponsored missions and public lectures. The Society had first been introduced in Edinburgh in 1845 and in Glasgow, by Rev. Peter Forbes of the Calton, in 1848. Karly Kehoe describes the SVP as a 'middle-class male outreach society'.[27] This is a helpful insight in reading Luby's verses, for the social status of the Society's members – or, rather, the lack of status – is highlighted in the third stanza of his panegyric: 'They boast not of lineage; no high-sounding name / Is theirs, and the world recks not whence they came' (ll. 13-14). For Luby, the definition of charity would seem to be grounded in the Scriptural precept that it should be practised without fanfare: 'They toil in a world of sorrow and sin, / Unnoticed they move in the midst of its din' (ll. 1-2). Once again, Luby the bookseller reaches for a bibliophile allusion: 'Their names are inscribed in the *Book* of His love' (l. 16). But the poem is also designed to be a hard-hitting critique of the perceived absence – indeed, inability – of the State in the task of ameliorating poverty and its

consequences. Luby seems to be implying that voluntary organisations, such as the SVP, should not be abandoned to their own efforts: 'They come not in grandeur, they come not in pride, / To dole out reluctant State charity's aid' (ll. 7-8) and, in the final stanza, 'They shall tell how they aided God's creatures of clay, / Whilst the world rolled on in its cold-hearted way' (ll. 19-20). One can only wonder whether Luby the bookseller was familiar with the works of the German prelate-novelist, Conrad von Bolanden (1828-1920), whose *The Progressionists and Angela* places in the mouth of one of the characters the following observation: 'St Vincent, alone, solved the social problem of his time. He was, in his time, the preserver of society, or rather, Christianity through him. . . It is not the modern state – not enlightened society, sunk in egotism and gold – that can save us. Christianity alone can do it. Social development will prove this.'[28] The sentiments here certainly represent a current of Catholic thought with which Luby would have been very familiar. Such political sensibilities looked for unconventional heroes unattached to the martial context of the battlefield. Consequently, for Luby, the Brothers of St Vincent de Paul are truly 'heroic' and 'true-hearted' (l. 24) in their war against want.[29]

Karly Kehoe also characterises the SVP as an organisation which 'helped to implement the wider ultramontane strategy of consolidation'.[30] Luby wrote his lines on the SVP only some seven years after the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in Scotland. These were still early days for the regularised life of the Scottish Catholic Church. The bishops sought to nurture Catholic communities led by their clergy and deriving their devotions from sources approved by Rome. This was what 'ultramontane' meant, in essence: looking beyond the Alps to the Eternal City and the Holy See in the interests of ever-closer proximity of mind and heart to the teaching office of the papacy. For Scottish Catholics in the 1880s, however, interest in contemporary Rome was motivated by something more than pious reverence for the Successor of St Peter. Since September 1870 and the fall of Rome to *Risorgimento* forces

intent on making the city the capital of the newly forged Kingdom of Italy, the Pope had styled himself 'the prisoner of the Vatican'. The so-called 'Roman Question' – the issue of how the relationship between Pope and Italy might finally be resolved – became one of the great geo-political issues of the day as, first, Pius IX withdrew into a sort of self-imposed 'house arrest', followed in 1878 by Leo XIII.

The 'pitiable' position of the papacy was a subject which drew the creative attentions of Catholic artists across the globe.[31] Peter R D'Agostino has characterised such activity as part of a 'transnational Catholic ideology'.[32] Once again, knowledge of a broader context elevates interest in the final poem of Luby's to be considered here above that of a passing example of localised popular poetry: 'To Humbert of Sardinia'.[33] In fact, this poem affords a window into a Scottish articulation of the ideology proposed by D'Agostino. The object of Luby's opprobrium is Humbert (Umberto) I of Italy (reigned 1878-1900):

> Yes, Humbert, base and cruel, excommunicated wretch!
> The day *will* come when all in vain your withered hands you'll stretch
> To God in abject mercy for the many insults you've thrown
> Against our well-beloved Leo, the King of Rome alone.
> Ye child of a Brigand chief,
> Ye sacrilegious thief!
> The day of vengeance will arrive, and you shall come to grief. (ll. 1-7)

Humbert, effectively, is Leo XIII's jailor but Luby looks forward to 'the triumph of our captive king and the downfall of your crew' (l. 11). Luby paints a picture of the Church universal praying for its suffering pope – 'From frozen North to torrid south, from farthest East to West / There rises forth an earnest prayer from many a manly breast' (ll. 8-9) – and,

in so doing, seems aware that his 'Glasgow poem' strides the greater stage of global Catholic opinion: 'And millions of his children are beseeching everywhere' (l. 18). He also illustrates a certain whimsy in his characterisation of Humbert as a 'Herod' (l. 15) who must now not take the next step of becoming a 'Pilate' (l. 16), as if these two New Testament personalities represented a progression in depravity. However, the ominous repeated theme throughout the poem is a premonition of Humbert's death: 'The day of vengeance shall arrive, and you shall come to grief' (l. 7); 'And raise him [Leo] on his throne again, ere you, his foe, shall die!' (l. 21); 'And you shall yet obey / The voice of Death, and Leo's foe shall yet be turned to clay!' (ll. 27-28). Here Luby begins to sound like a prophet of the Old Testament, urging repentance of 'the dastardly apostate from a saintly honoured line (i.e. the House of Savoy)' (l. 22) and forewarning dire consequences if his words are not heeded. Unbeknown to Luby at the date of composition was the fact that Leo XIII, 34 years older than his rival, was to outlive Humbert as the king did, indeed, have a date with destiny when he died at the hands, not of a papal apologist, but of an anarchist assassin on 29 July 1900.

John Luby died, aged 68, on 20 March 1925 in Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow, as a result of an increasingly debilitating and chronic bronchitis. His death certificate confirms that he never married and describes him as a 'journalist'.[34] He seems to have continued his writing of poetry into his later years. In a letter to him from Alexander MacCallum Scott MP, dated 3 December 1910, Luby's parliamentary representative lamented the fact that he was unable to obtain more tickets for a public meeting with Lloyd George, but aimed to dilute any disappointment felt by Luby with a most upbeat final commendation: 'Many thanks for your capital and rousing verses.'[35]

**James Lynch**

James Lynch was writing at the same time as John Luby and it is possible that the two men knew each other. The 1881 Census records that he was born in Ireland.[36] Signing his poems 'Coatbridge', he was, in fact, latterly headmaster of St Patrick's school in that Lanarkshire town, and active in local politics where, for example, he was instrumental in delivering the Irish nationalist vote for the successful Tory candidate, in compliance with Parnellite instructions, in 1885.[37] His first wife having died, by the date of his own untimely death from pulmonary tubercolosis, aged 45 in June 1886, he had married again.[38] Lynch's premature passing was the occasion for the publication of two poetic panegyrics in the *Glasgow Observer*.[39] Under the general heading 'In Memoriam – James Lynch', John St Paul and Tom Burns (the latter of Newton Street, Partick) penned their tributes. From the St Paul effort (separately titled 'Requiescat-in-Pace'), we learn of Lynch's 'well-loved Irish shore' (l. 4) and of his dedication of his muse to the 'glorious old cause' (l. 6) of Irish home rule. He would have loved to see his aspirations fulfilled but:

> It was not to be: the harp is stilled,
> And his hand shall never again
> Strike the chords in honour of his native land
> In a hopeful bright refrain (ll. 9-12).

There is compelling intimation of the emotional impact of Lynch's poems on his reading audience in Tom Burns' elegy where he muses nostalgically that Lynch's poetic voice, which 'bade us wait, and hope, and to rejoice, / Shall never wake again' (ll. 8-9). Echoing Longfellow, Burns' later reference to a 'holy calm' which will 'bring peace, and make his memory more dear' (ll. 13-14) serves, further, to remind the reader that this cohort of

Catholic poets would seem to have had lofty expectations of their readership in terms of the latter's ability to recognise and appreciate such literary allusions.[40]

What can the early editions of the *Glasgow Observer* reveal about the voice and concerns of James Lynch who evoked such sentiments from his fellow poets? Like so many of the *Observer* poets, Lynch sought to depict the daily grind and tribulations of the lives of his community. A generation before Patrick MacGill's classic *Children of the Dead End* (1914) populated the Scottish imagination with transfixing images of Irish navvies and the trials of the rural and urban migrant poor, James Lynch's verse encapsulates an already developed perception of discrimination and undeserved hardship. A telling representative of the genre is 'The Dying Mother'.[41] The poem purports to be autobiographical in light of a footnote which declares that 'the first part of the [poem] was published some years ago; but the writer's little girl has only recently met with her second great affliction – the total deprivation of sight.' The poem begins with the words of the mother referred to in the title:

> Wha will pet my bairnie noo,
> Wha will kame her silken hair,
> Wha will kiss her rosy mou'
> Whan she's lisped her evening prayer? (ll. 1-4).

Of particular interest here is the religious motif – a hint of the importance of parental example in the lives of youngsters in developing imitations of the pious habits of their elders. In the third stanza, Lynch raises the emotional pitch in this vein:

> Wha will 'ware my lassie noo,
> Hoo tae shun ilk pit an' snare –

Speak o' Heaven, an' tell her hoo

Nocht defiled can enter there? (ll. 17-20).

Is implicit in Lynch's verse an awareness of the fate of 'fallen women' in Glasgow's darker passageways? The mother seems only too cognisant of the terrible future which might await her daughter without the stability of her maternal guidance. The final three stanzas make it clear that, with her mother now dead, the child has entered a world of darkness but it is due to physical blindness, a presaging of which God had deigned to spare the sick mother. The poem, it would seem, is not only about a dying mother but about the mercy of God and the indelible imprint of pure love. For a society which had to live with the grim reality of high mortality as an everyday reality, there is something more than poetic fancy in the depiction of the child's on-going relationship with her deceased mother who continues to send 'her ain bricht spirit doon' (l. 56). Lynch is passing comment on the resilience of human memory which provides consolation for young and old. The child can take pleasure in the memory of her mother, but so too does the owner of the poem's authorial voice, who warms to the fleeting comforts which memories of her departed mother evoke in the child.

However, Lynch, like his contemporary Luby, was more than a 'painter' of vignettes or 'miniatures' of the daily lives of the working-class. He was interested in social structures, aligning himself with socialist rhetoric and the nascent Labour movement. One poem's title – 'The Song of the Serf (in the Days of Old)' – is resonant with seditious intent.[42] Further evidence of Lynch's informed interest in current affairs and political controversies is to be found elsewhere in his *Glasgow Observer* corpus. 'A Lay of Avondale' is a eulogy in praise of Charles Stewart Parnell which summons up the ghosts of significant Irish cultural figures such as Thomas Osborne Davis (1814–45), a poet of the Young Ireland movement and a Protestant, and Thomas Moore (1779–1852), an advocate for Catholic emancipation, and best

known for his *Irish Melodies*.[43] Such passing evocations offer tantalising glimpses, perhaps, of Lynch's own library and reading habits. 'Mutinous Joseph' is a particularly sophisticated commentary on the resignation of Joseph Chamberlain from Gladstone's third government in 1886 as a consequence of his opposition to Irish Home Rule.[44] The sophistication lies in the clever disguise of the various lead characters. Lynch's readership were clearly expected to be well enough informed in current affairs as to be able to identify who was who. There is even an allusion to the notorious adultery case of 1886 involving Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke (1843-1911). Something of an unforgiving, sarcastic side to Lynch's character – in a literary sense, at least – is revealed here.

A third poem typical of this political genre is 'A Sorrowful Christmas Party (Christmas Eve 1885)' which is populated by then familiar imperialist officers (General Sir Peter Stark Lumsden, General Garnet Joseph Wolseley, and General Redvers Henry Buller) and principal players in Irish affairs (John Poyntz Spencer).[45] The poem is the verbal equivalent of a *Punch* cartoon, with each of the figures made to look ridiculous, in contrast to their coiffured public images. Spencer, for example, twice Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, mouths a lament that Ireland will not be subdued despite the fact that he has 'hanged. . .evicted, burned' (ll. 21-22). In a sense, Lynch plays with the word 'burned' for it is an image of British tyranny in Ireland which he wishes to be 'burned' into the souls of his readership. He will have no truck with the imperialist agenda and his sympathies lie with those who, like the Irish, suffer oppression as a result. General Wolseley, leader of the Nile expedition against Sudan in 1884–85, proclaims that he is haunted by 'those dying Arabs' cries! / Oh, horror – how they ring!' (ll. 35-36). It is clear where Lynch wants the sympathies of his readers to be directed. Perhaps most interesting of all, from the perspective of reading Lynch as a Catholic poet, is the fact that he chooses also to lampoon Bishop George Errington (1804–86) who

famously argued against the definition of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870, one of only a handful of bishops to do so. Lynch writes:

> And Errington, that erring one,
> From Tiber's banks came he,
> Yet never bade the Pope good–bye,
> He left so hastilie. (ll. 13-16)

The implication here is that Lynch saw in the proclamation of papal infallibility something more than a statement about the function of the papal teaching office or a dogmatic expression of religious belief but, rather, an iconic totem with which to identify as part of the Irish Catholic diaspora.

Indeed, like Luby, Lynch's Catholicism gave him particular occasion to observe the wider European stage, specifically looking towards Rome. In 1885, the Irish bishops travelled to Rome for an audience with Leo XIII (1878–1903). Lynch's response was to scribe a celebratory ode entitled 'The Irish Bishops in Rome'.[46] The poem's tone is intended to be dramatic; its central characters – the bishops – heroic figures who serve as embodiments of Irish history, resilience and identity. Lynch noticeably adopts a neo-medieval symbolism while commenting on what he considers a very modern state-of-affairs:

> God bless the mitred pilgrim band, whose wisdom, worth and lore
> Shed lustre on our native land as in the days of yore;
> Whose tongues of fire at Leo's court denounce the recreant knave
> Who dares defame each honoured name, our patriots true and brave. (ll. 1-4)

The poet goes on to emphasise that Ireland has been beset with problems ever since 'the wily Saxon sought / Rome's sanction for his schemes accursed, and dire the ills he's sought' (ll. 5-6), probably an allusion to the diplomatic machinations of King Henry II (1154– 89) of England at the papal court in the High Middle Ages.[47] The bishops are but the latest in a long line of defenders of the Irish Church and its traditions: 'Yet faithful still through seas of blood by Peter's barque we've stood' (l. 7). In the third stanza, however, an element of the colloquial is suddenly introduced by Lynch which serves to remind his readers that these men of the Spirit – speaking in 'tongues of fire' – are, in the end, flesh-and-blood human beings who must share the trials of the Irish people while standing by their communities, inspiring their loyalty to the Catholic faith and Irish nationhood: 'Our "soggarth" shared our woes, our tears, or with our martyrs died' (l. 10). The 'soggarth' is the priest – here specifically a bishop – who, indeed, represents Ireland. Lynch goes on to comment that, in Rome, the bishops 'define our claims, our hopes, our aims and bring to shame the foe' (l. 16). He ends with a rallying 'Ye patriot Prelates, hail!' (l. 20).

What is clear from a broader examination of the context of the Irish bishops' Roman visit of 1885, however, is that Lynch's poem is, unsurprisingly, 'spin'. It is an eloquent example of art driven by political and religious ideology which is unperturbed by the details of actual events. *The Times* of London, while clearly slanting its report in its turn, nevertheless offers an alternative (and, hence, balancing) narrative of the Irish bishops receiving something of a 'ticking off' from a gaunt Leo XIII.[48] The Pope seems to have been annoyed at a slight towards the Prince of Wales such as (notes the newspaper) the German bishops even in the full heat of the *kulturkampf* would not have awarded the Kaiser. Vatican frustration and lack of understanding with issues relating to the Irish Home Rule cause and the concurrent campaigning against inherited landholdings was undoubtedly a dominant sentiment behind the façade of the ceremonial and protocols. But it is precisely the

'whitewashing' of historical detail which makes Lynch's poem so interesting as testimony to the 'Rome of the imagination' to which this Coatbridge writer could appeal in order to legitimise his identity as an Irish-diaspora Catholic living in late Victorian Scotland. In short, the poem is a reminder that Catholic identity in the Scotland of this period was complex and far from straightforward.[49]

The final poem by Lynch to be considered here has been chosen precisely because it allows the reader a fleeting glimpse of the fellowship and camaraderie enjoyed in sections of the Scottish Catholic community. Where 'The Irish Bishops in Rome' had focused on the ranks of the 'successors of the apostles', 'St Patrick's Day in Scotland 1886' takes us inside a humble community hall.[50] There is nothing new in asserting that the revelries of St Patrick's Day indulged in by the Irish diaspora have traditionally been perceived as even more fervent than in the Emerald Isle itself – as if Irish identity inherited from immigrant antecedents had to be reinvigorated through multi-faceted celebrations (processions, concerts, etc.).[51] It is certainly with a comment on distance from Ireland that Lynch begins his poem:

> Oh, a rare St Patrick's day we've had,
> Though far from dear old home;
> For with buoyant hearts and hopes high-strung,
> We talked of the days to come. (ll. 1-4)

Already it is clear that, despite its title, the poem is not predominantly about 1886 at all – it is about a yet unrealised, but much hoped for, future. Conversations 'but lightly glanced on the bitter past' while 'our songs and speeches bore the ring / Of the Irish volunteers' (ll. 5, 7-8). While intending to make his political point, Lynch also allows his reader an enticing glimpse

of an aspect of the social life of the Catholic community. Working-class men and women make merry,

> To see the brawny sons of toil,
> With their wives and sweethearts bright,
> Throng every hall in the stranger's land,
> For one glorious Irish night (ll. 9-12)

while the patrician parish priest watches from the side-lines:

> How the *soggarth aroon*, with his beaming face,
> On his children gazed with pride
> And told them, with hearts and arms like theirs,
> A nation hath never died. (ll. 20-24)[52]

Lynch implies that these are typical scenes throughout Scotland rather than a description of festivities in his home town of Coatbridge alone. In fact, Lynch is glossing over tensions within Catholic communities where it was felt by some that particularly, but not exclusively, non-Irish priests in Scotland were not sufficiently supportive of Irish political aspirations while, at the same time, happily involving themselves in socio-cultural expressions of Irish identity.[53] The penultimate stanza reveals once more Lynch's veneration of Charles Stewart Parnell as he depicts his fellow-carousers offering up a prayer 'that heaven might nerve his arm / To hew down the Upas Tree' (ll. 27-28).[54] Given the merrymaking context, this could hardly have been a prayer uttered in hushed tones but, rather, one can imagine the declamations over the noise of others. The poem ends, finally, with uplifted hands and the

sharing of a ‘solemn vow’ to fight on with the cause (of Irish Home Rule) while ‘a link remained / On the breast of our native land’ (ll. 35-36). It could not be clearer that this is an exile’s poem. Yet there is a hint in these words of a recognition too troubling to be fully articulated by Lynch in 1886 – a fear that, with the passing years and generations, links with Ireland might weaken and break. It is a presage of an unwanted future and, almost as an immediate riposte to himself for thinking so ambiguously towards such a distant time, Lynch tries to tame the unpredictability of an open-ended future by setting down a ‘yardstick’ twelve months hence. In his final lines, the poet expresses the hope:

> that on next St Patrick’s Day
> Our delight will be yet more keen,
> When the old green flag of a nation free
> Shall be floating o’er College Green. (ll. 37-40)

Lynch’s vision of the flag of a free people, within a year, flying in the heart of Dublin in the precincts of such symbols of Irish nationhood as Trinity College and the site of Ireland’s onetime Parliament House must stand as a corrective to any portrait of him as a pragmatic radical. Like many poets before and since, this adopted son of Coatbridge allowed himself to dream of a world which might be, hoping that the like-minded readership of the *Glasgow Observer* would join him in his ‘conspiracy of the imagination’.

**Final thoughts and conclusion**

In the final analysis, the aim of this article has been not to assess the ‘quality’ of the poems discussed. There are no claims that such creations deserve a place alongside a previously accepted canon of ‘great’ Victorian literature. What is argued, however, is that the poems

merit examination precisely because they are representative of a genre of popular literature which people read in considerable numbers in a cultural context where poetry reading and recitation in private and public was so prevalent. Miriam Elizabeth Burstein (in a related study on historical fiction) has recently encapsulated the same point most eloquently in noting that any study of religion and literature which focuses on 'canonical works' while dismissing the literature of magazines and newspapers stands to 'badly skew' scholars' understanding of 'the Victorian religious landscape'.[55] Poets mirror assumptions and perceptions of their times; at the same time, continuing publication of their poems evidence the existence of an interested readership (in the broadest sense of those able to access the poems directly in print and those whose lack of literacy required the poems to be read to them).

In summary, therefore, it can be asserted that poets, such as John Luby and James Lynch, drew on a wide range of cultural and artistic resources (Celtic Revival, other more canonical Victorian poets' works, and recent political, economic and religious developments) in their construction of popular poems for the *Glasgow Observer*. Their works provided reading material for a transatlantic readership, as well as for a very local audience. A highly fluid identity can be traced in these poems: their authors demonstrated allegiance to Ireland as well as to Scotland, and kinship with other displaced Irish emigrants abroad. Such poems as have been the focus throughout this article suggest a literary network in Scotland that has been completely submerged in literary criticism to date. There can be little doubt that these poets knew one another – or, at least, knew each other's work – and were writing to, and about, each other. The present survey offers merely a glimpse into this network. There remains, however, much more to discover about the reading and writing habits of the late Victorian Catholic community in Scotland. A field which has previously been so critically under-explored still has many surprises to reveal and rich insights to bestow.

[1] Clifford Williamson, *The History of Catholic Intellectual Life in Scotland, 1918-1965*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), pp. 13-14. *The Innes Review*, biannual journal of the Scottish Catholic Historical Association, has since first publication in 1950 long been at the forefront of innovative scholarship relating to the Catholic community in Scotland.

[2] T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, (London: Penguin, 1999), pp. 486-500.

[3] Bernard Aspinwall, 'Scots and Irish Clergy ministering to immigrants, 1830-1878', *Innes Review*, 47:1 (1996), pp. 45-68.

[4] Bernard Aspinwall, 'Anyone for Glasgow? The Strange Nomination of the Rt. Rev. Charles Eyre in 1868', *Recusant History*, 23:4 (1997), pp. 589-601.

[5] Martin J Mitchell (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Irish in Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 2008).

[6] Liam McIlvanney, 'The Scottish Renaissance and the Irish Invasion: Literary Attitudes to Irishness in Inter-War Scotland', *Scottish Studies Review*, 2:1 (2001), pp. 77-89. Of related interest, see Patrick Reilly, 'Catholics and Scottish Literature 1878-1978', *Innes Review*, 29:2 (1978), pp. 183-203.

[7] In seeking to understand the origins and mission of the *Glasgow Observer* within a broader context of the Irish press in Britain, see Joan Allen, "'Keeping the Faith': The Catholic Press and the Preservation of Celtic Identity in Britain in the late nineteenth century", in Richard C. Allen and Stephen Regan (eds.), *Irelands of the Mind: Memory and Identity in Modern Irish Culture*, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 32-49. Also, Owen Dudley Edwards, 'The Catholic Press in Scotland since the Restoration of the Hierarchy', *Innes Review*, 29:2 (1978), pp. 168-174.

[8] David Herschell Edwards, *Modern Scottish Poets* (Brechin: D H Edwards, 1889), pp. 368-70.

[9] Registration of Birth, Statutory Births 644/05 0691, District of Clyde, Burgh of Glasgow. 1856, no. 691.

[10] Census. 1891. Scotland. Civil Parish of Barony, Bridgeton, Lanarkshire. 644/01 007/00 003. http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk: accessed 11 August 2016.

[11] D J O'Donoghue, *The Poets of Ireland; A Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of Irish Writers of English Verse*, (Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1912), p. 257.

[12] Census. 1871. Scotland. Quoad Sacra Parish of Chalmers, Glasgow. 644/04 040/00 016. http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk: accessed 11 August 2016.

[13] Census. 1881. Scotland. Civil Parish of Barony, Quoad Sacra Parish of Newhall, Glasgow. 644/01 042/00 014. http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk: accessed 11 August 2016.

[14] Unfortunately, it has not been possible to locate a copy of Luby's collection of religious poems. A copy of *The Book of the Season*, however, is preserved in the library of the Bishopsgate Institute in London.

[15] *Glasgow Observer*, 26 September 1885, p. 2.

[16] Ian Bradley, *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 135.

[17] Ibid., p. 136.

[18] An earlier poem by Luby, entitled 'A Plea for Scottish History', was even more forthright perhaps in its reclamation of the past, ending with the following striking lines: 'The history of Scotland, go! Teach it in the schools; / Dispel at once the platitiudes, the empty cant, of fools, / And show the children of her soil, all other lands on earth - / They'll never need to blush for her, the land that gave them birth.' *Glasgow Observer*, 18 July 1885, p. 2.

[19] *Glasgow Observer*, 9 October 1886, p. 7.

[20] Francis R Walsh, 'Who speaks for Boston's Irish? The *Boston Pilot* in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 10:3 (1982), 21-36.

[21] Graham Law, *Serialising Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

[22] Bradley, p. 143.

[23] See Bradley, p. 136.

[24] *Glasgow Observer*, 20 February 1886, p. 7.

[25] 'No salvation outside the Church': this ancient phrase has been open to several interpretations amongst Catholic theologians over the centuries. Luby's poem - effectively, a gloss on 'extra ecclesiam nulla salus' - seeks to assert a narrower nineteenth-century interpretation that salvation is achieved specifically through the Catholic Church, led by the Popes. See Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992).

[26] *Glasgow Observer*, 6 June 1885, p. 2.

[27] S. Karly Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church: Catholicism, Gender and Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 65.

[28] Conrad von Bolanden, *The Progressionists and Angela*, (New York: The Catholic Publication Society, 1873) p. 144.

[29] John Price, *Everyday Heroism: Victorian Constructions of the Heroic Civilian* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

[30] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, p. 63.

[31] Jan de Maeyer, "Léon XIII: 'Lumen in Coelo'. Glissements de la perception dans le contexte d'un processus de modernisation religieuse", in Vincent Viaene, *The Papacy and the New World Order: Vatican Diplomacy, Catholic Opinion and International Politics at the Time of Leo XIII*, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), pp. 303-322.

[32] Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) provides a model of scholarship in this area.

[33] *Glasgow Observer*, 24 October 1885, p. 2. Kirstie Blair identifies the Italian *Risorgimento* as a significant global event which caught the attentions of poets who expected some degree of familiarity with such events amongst their readers. Blair's focus on poetry sympathetic with the Garibaldian cause offers an illuminating contrast with Luby's effort discussed here. See Kirstie Blair, '"A Very Poetical Town": Newspaper Poetry and the Working-Class Poet in Victorian Dundee', *Victorian Poetry*, 52:1 (2014), pp. 89-109, esp. pp. 93, 100-101.

[34] Registration of Death. 1925. District of Springburn, County of Lanark. 644/06 0214. http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk: accessed 11 August 2016.

[35] University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections, MS Gen 1465/373.

[36] Census. 1881. Scotland. Civil Parish of Old Monkland, Coatbridge. 652/02 005/00 017. http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk: accessed 11 August 2016.

[37] Geraldine Vaughan, *The 'Local' Irish in the West of Scotland, 1851-1921*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), p. 116.

[38] Registration of Death. 1886. District of Coatbridge, County of Lanark. 652/02 0295. http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk: accessed 11 August 2016.

[39] *Glasgow Observer*, 10 July 1886, p. 2.

[40] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow refers to 'holy calm' twice on p. 172 of *Hyperion: A Romance*, vol. 2, (New York: Samuel Colman, 1839). There appears to be no scholarly study of the use of this favourite phrase of Victorian evangelicals (including hymn writers).

[41] *Glasgow Observer*, 11 July 1885, p. 2.

[42] *Glasgow Observer*, 30 May 1885, p. 2. In this poem, the threat is that the world is about to be turned upside-down. Inheritance by right of birth must be no more: the bounty of the land must be won through the nobility of work: 'Then be it known that we who've sown / Shall reap the fruits – we swear it!' Landlords are 'despots' and 'lazy lordlings' who must now 'weave or delve or row the boat / Ye shall – or out we'll drive you!' By the poem's last stanza, Lynch has cast aside any ambiguity. The message is very clear: we are coming to get you!

[43] *Glasgow Observer*, 9 January 1886, p. 2.

[44] *Glasgow Observer*, 10 April 1886, p. 2.

[45] *Glasgow Observer*, 13 June 1885, p. 2.

[46] *Glasgow Observer*, 23 May 1885, p. 2.

[47] Marcus Bull, 'Criticism of Henry II's expedition to Ireland in William of Canterbury's Miracles of St Thomas Becket', *Journal of Medieval History*, 33:2 (2007), pp. 107-129.

[48] *The Times*, 1 May 1885, p. 5.

[49] Further testimony of this complex identity was the gracious acceptance sent in 1897 to John Luby on behalf of Queen Victoria on receipt of the Bridgeton poet's little volume of *Diamond Jubilee Verses*. See *Glasgow Herald*, 10 June 1897, p. 9.

[50] *Glasgow Observer*, 27 March 1886, p. 2.

[51] Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A History of St Patrick's Day* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. xvi.

[52] Lynch was probably familiar with the work of the Kilkenny-born John Banim (1798-1842) whose poem *The Irish Peasant to his Priest* encapsulated the sentimental attachment of the Irish Catholic to the priesthood with its repetitive use of the refrain 'Soggarth aroon'. See John Banim, *Chaunt of the Cholera – Songs for Ireland*, (London: James Cochrane, 1831), pp. 66-69.

[53] Karly Kehoe has underlined the desire of many in Catholic communities to 'distance themselves from militant radicalism', led by priests who were 'concerned for the reputation of their congregations'. See Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, 154. Indeed, there is evidence that, in contrast to enthusiastic attendances at Irish-themed social gatherings, those parish groups affiliated to movements promoting specifically political support - for example, the *Irish National League of Great Britain* - tended to find their numbers fluctuate greatly over the years and decades. See, for example, Raymond McCluskey, *St Joseph's Kilmarnock 1847-1997: A Portrait of a Parish Community* (Kilmarnock: St Joseph's Church, 1997), p. 91.

[54] The upas tree is a native of Java in south-east Asia with a highly poisonous sap. Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), doctor, natural historian and poet, referred to it as the 'hydra-tree of death' and claimed that the juice of the plant, seeping into the land, had been responsible for vast areas of depopulation. See Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden* (London: J. Johnson, 1791), p. 110. In employing the upas tree as a symbol of British rule in Ireland, Lynch was hardly pulling his punches.

[55] Miriam Elizabeth Burstein, *Victorian Reformations: Historical Fiction and Religious Controversy, 1820-1900*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), p. 2.